

A Bad Idea

by Backroads

Category: How to Train Your Dragon
Genre: Angst, Romance
Language: English
Characters: Ruffnut, Snotlout
Status: Completed
Published: 2011-10-05 22:48:04
Updated: 2011-10-05 22:48:04
Packaged: 2016-04-26 12:59:06
Rating: T
Chapters: 1
Words: 1,991
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: Two young lovers madly eloping. What could go wrong?

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This was written for the Zetaboards Sticks and Stones contest. Won 2nd place. Yay me.

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><p>The coals dimmed to mere streaks of orange, but the stick that stirred them lay unused in the ashes. Snotlout's eyes were red in the faint light, his mouth tight, hands folded gruffly against his chest.<p>

Gods, he hated it when girls cried. Or when anyone cried, for that matter. He felt stupid enough when tears came to his own eyes and the sound of someone else making that awful accompanying noise was more than he could take. He supposed he could do something comforting, even a little romantic, to make her quietâ€"but as it was the sound of Ruffnut's sobs reached far beyond the canopy as a beacon for anyone wondering where they were.

Amazing they had not yet been discovered. Again.

Maybe this was a bad idea. The big fight, the running away, those few failed attempts in the grass under the blankets. The concept of an idea being bad was a new one for himâ€"Snotlout was not the type to think anything but that which was inspired.

Four days out from Berk. They could have gone farther had Ruffnut not been so insistent about using a boat. More romantic, she had insisted. Dragonriding was so common now, a boat ride would be totally novel. Their location was a little island somewhere south of Berk. Maybe more to the Southeast. Either way the travel had been

next to impossible and they were lucky to be alive.

Hah. How lucky? All Snotlout had to show for this failure was an empty belly and a girl that would not stop crying. Barely had the thought escaped him than Ruffnut renewed her wailing with all the passion he had expected from her in other ways.

He squeezed his eyes together for a moment then slowly stood up from the fire's remnants. "Babe?" He flinched. His voice was far too high when he spoke. May as well have been a child.

She was curled up under a spruce, knees against her chest, her hair half-out of its braids. The moonlight lit her up like a ghost. "Go swallow a knife." A solid threat despite all the bawling.

Ah, man. He was not even sure how to begin that sort of event. He took a moment for thought by scratching behind his ear. "The fire is almost outâ€" "

"Not my fault."

"â€"and there's nothing really to eatâ€" "

"Not hungry." She lifted her head, a blotchy mess against pale skin, and wiped greasy tears from her eyes.

"All right." He paused and felt the weight of the motion sink between them. "Yeah, I'm not hungry. Either. Much. I justâ€" | justâ€" just wanted to let you know I'm here for you and everything is fine and I'll stay up and watch for wolves or whatever monsters this island has and you can- "

The rock hit him in the stomach, dead center. Like being punched. He stumbled backwards, unable to even moan for a full minute but instead noticing that Ruffnut did not even take in the results of her conquest.

"You can do whatever you want," he finished breathlessly and painfully.

She nodded into her knees.

He stumbled backwards and finally slumped against another tree. Somewhere up above a cloud passed over the moon, and all he could see of Ruffnut faded.

This was stupid. What was he doing here so far from home with some maddeningly violent girl who five days ago had been so hot? He should just hop back on a boat and leave her here with her tears.

No. His heart twisted at that idea. Snotlout was not the type to run away with just any girl. He was stuck here. Couldn't even go back and kill Tuffnut like he wanted to. His teeth clenched and he pounded a fist against the tree.

The only thing visible were Ruffnut's eyes, luminous in the darkness. "You're mad at me?"

Ah, crap. She had heard. Well, there were plenty of things to be mad about but respect was too strong. "No. Not at you."

"Because I didn't do anything wrong."

Sure she did. Half this idea was her fault. "No, your stupid brother did everything wrong." He regretted the words the moment they were out of his mouth.

The bawling resumed.

Snotlout let his head bang back against the tree. So this was some sort of test from the gods, right? He would eventually be rewarded for this sorrow and the desperation between his legs would be satisfied? Not very likely. Maybe he should go throw himself into the ocean.

Instead he heard himself apologizing. "But he better not tell anyone where we are."

Ruffnut hiccupped and shook her head. Her hair rustled against her tree. "Doesn't matter. None of it matters anymore. No one will even want to come after us. Didn't you hear what he said?"

Yeah, Snotlout had heard. The entire ocean had heard. That damned Zippleback bellowing up a storm while Tuffnut had shouted about how Thorston women did not dishonor their families by running off and how it would be better for her to never show her face in Berk again. Snotlout didn't get it. He figured he was a good catch. So what if Ruffnut had been betrothed to someone twice her age. So what if the two of them hadn't bothered with any proper marriage plans. "He doesn't mean it. Not that way."

Her voice was full of despair. "He was probably speaking for my parents."

She was so emotional! So obnoxious. After his admiration of Astrid Hofferson had cooled, all that sass of Ruffnut's was extremely attractive. She was as rough as her name, really rather pretty, and seemingly so above all that whiney girl nonsense. Never had he heard anyone cry so much, though; not in his entire life.

It was all such a bad idea.

He sighed deeply and stood up. His stomach still pained. Maybe from hunger. "I'll take you back. I mean, if that's what you want. I will apologize to your family and everything will be fine. It's not like anything's been done anyway."

"It's not what I want." Her voice was adamant.

The latter was what he wanted. She was being so difficult.

Then her voice was less sure. "Is it what you want?"

"Want?" he echoed. Thor, he was no longer even sure. Think about what he wanted. Yeah, he was fine to do that. Though he didn't mean to speak aloud. "What I want is to be with you."

"What aboutâ€¦ it?"

The girl couldn't even name what the common animals did. That

giggling first night in a boat tied up on a rock outside Escape Island #1 ending up in the supremacy of awkwardness as Ruffnut screamed in pain and pushed his half-done body from her. Others attempts had been no more successful. And not always due to her fault. The other night he was so sure she was fine but the fear of causing a nice girl pain had its effects.

He couldn't think of a lie. He was no good at lying. "I don't know, Ruff. I don't know."

She seemed to have stopped breathing. "I'm so sorry. There's just so much on my mind."

Amazing. A sincere apology. "Does that really make a difference?"

"Yes, you idiot. At leastâ€¦ I think so. It does for me. We're running away and my family hates me and they hate you and Tuff already knows where we are and I miss everyoneâ€¦" Another round of crying.

"You think that's it?" he asked.

Nodding. "Though don't ask me to explain you."

"Well, when you're all scared and everything, I can'tâ€¦"

"Yeah, I get it. I'm sorry."

So was he. "Are you sure you don't want to go back?"

She shrugged. "What does it matter?"

"Do you want to keep going?"

She paused before nodding. "Yes. Don't know why."

"Wellâ€¦ do youâ€¦ do you love me?"

"Yes."

His body swelled with relief. "I'm glad."

"At leastâ€¦ I think so." She sniffed. "I think I love you. Because it will sure suck if I'm doing this crazy thing and I don't."

The night grew colder as the final orange strands of the coals flickered out. "What do you mean?"

"What if you're just some guy I'm running off with because I'm upset? What if I don't even like you? What if this whole thing is one big mistake? We can't even properly fornicate, for crying out loud!"

Crying out loud indeed. But the rest of her words struck him like another thrown stone. "If you don't want in you can go back." He sounded angrier than he meant, almost as angry as he felt. "Do you think I'm having a good time out here while everyone else is partying back in Berk? Do you think I like having to deal with some weepy blonde?"

"Then take me back!" By the sound of things she was on her feet, probably searching for another projectile-to-be-weapon. "I'll go back and apologize to my family and we will be left with a whole lot of awkward memories and we will never be able to even look at each other ever again! You can go sleep with every girl in town and maybe you'll have better luck with them!"

"I don't want every other girl!" His shout was louder than Ruffnut's crying had ever been.

"What?" Barely a breath of sound.

"I love you and I don't even care if you love me! Weâ€| we will figure it out. Or something."

"Or something?" Ruffnut still whispered.

He had no specifics there. "Look, I'm sorry about your family. And I'll probably kill them for making you cry like this."

"Don't!" Now she was back to loud pleading.

He ignored her. His emotions were haywire, completely in charge. "I just thought, when we left, we were committed to this. We both had the idea, we were both all for it. I figured we were going to continue it and make it work."

"Iâ€| I am committed. I told you I don't want to go back."

'Then act like it!'

He hadn't realized how close she had moved. The sting on his face was his only clue. Her hand flashed over his face twice more. "You're the one who kept offering to take me back, you moron."

"That's only because youâ€'"

"I don't want to hear it," she said shortly. "I'm tired. We can just figure out this whole mess in the morning." Her footsteps faded into the distance as she headed toward their blankets.

He followed, his mind a blur and his throat sore. No dinner, no warmth from the fire. Just Ruffnut, still clothed, yet so warm next to him.

He really did love her. He didn't want to go back. He jus wanted things to be all right. Was that so crazy a desire?

She began to cry again. Nothing major, just soft weeping. All girls cried. Fine, he'd accept that.

Suddenly he hoped he wasn't the reason for any of it. "I'm sorry," he said. "Youâ€| you feelâ€|" he searched his mind. "Confused right now. Is that it?"

She nodded.

"Anything you want me to do?"

"Just be here."

That was all? "Done."

She snuggled against him. "This is all so messed up."

"Tell me about it."

"Snotlout?"

He had just closed his eyes for sleep. "Yeah?"

"I'm pretty sure I really do love you."

The End

End
file.